

Wanderers to meet Cheltenham Town

WYCOMBE Wanderers have a great chance of reaching the second round proper of the F.A. Cup on November 23 when they take on Cheltenham Town, from the Southern league Division One (North), at Loakes Park (writes Stuart Earp).

If Wanderers are successful against Cheltenham, and on paper the draw seems to favour the Blues, it would be the second successive year the club has reached the second round. Last term they beat Newport and then lost to Peterborough in round two.

Although many Wycombe fans must have been hoping for a tie against a Football League side, their chances of meeting a Division Three or Four side in the next round must be greater. First of all, however, Cheltenham must be disposed of.

Currently, they are situated 12th in the table, although their F.A. Cup run has meant they have fallen behind on league fixtures. Their current record reads P. 9, W. 4, D. 3, L. 2, Goals for 13, Goals against 10, for a total of 11 points.

In their four qualifying matches, Town were fortunate to be drawn at home in all four rounds and their trip to Loakes Park on the 23rd will be their first away game in the Cup so far. In the first round they beat Llanelli 3-2, followed by victories over Gloucester City 4-1, Cinderford Town 3-2 and Salisbury (on Saturday) 4-1.

One man who has made a big impression in the cup run is striker Dave Lewis. He has scored in every round so far, hitting the target no less than seven times including a hat-trick against Cinderford and two against Salisbury. In the Gloucester game he recorded his 100th goal for the club.

Cheltenham have three new faces at the club this season — including a change in the management. Dennis Allen, brother of former Q.P.R. star Les, took over the reigns bringing with him ex-Reading player Tony Wagstaffe. The other new man is Ken Skeen, who was a regular with Oxford United last term.

Skeen, in fact, played against Wanderers when Cheltenham came down for a friendly at the end of last season. The match ended at 1-1, Cheltenham

equalising with a disputed penalty and the man who scored from the spot was former Wycombe favourite Julian Lailey, who won international recognition during his time at Loakes Park. Julian also went on tour to Cyprus with the Blues at the end of last season. One Wycombe player who knows Cheltenham well is Dylan Evans. He was top goalscorer for the club the year before he came down to join the Blues.

Cheltenham's record in the F.A. Cup against Isthmian League opposition is not one that is likely to worry Wycombe. In 1962 they lost 3-6 at home to Enfield, who included their present manager Tommy Lawrence and then in 1970 they went down at home to Oxford City 0-2.

Apart from Lewis, who has rattled in 16 goals already this season, two other players have been catching the eye. Dave Dangerfield, a former English Schools international, is on top form, while the 34-years-old veteran Roger Thorndale began his 20th season with the club this year and has notched up a record 675 appearances.

Manager Allen, who like Wycombe boss Brian Lee, is a

fully qualified F.A. coach, steered Belgium League side Ostend up from the third to the first division before taking the Cheltenham job. He is reported to be optimistic about his club's chances against Wanderers.

Wycombe reaction to the draw was favourable. Secretary Bert Crump said: "This draw can't be bad. I think we can take a step forward, although we mustn't write Cheltenham off just yet. But as we've just beaten a Southern league Premier Division side, our chances must be good against a club from a lower division."

Blues boss Brian Lee would have preferred a league club but added; "The vital part of any cup draw is home advantage, and this match against Cheltenham could certainly have been a lot worse."

STAND tickets for the Wycombe v Cheltenham game will be on sale at the club on Wednesday and Saturday this week and on further dates to be decided in the near future.

FOOTNOTE: Wanderers were due to meet Cheltenham in a friendly on November 13. Understandably, the match has now been cancelled!